

FELLOWSHIP AND CO-OPERATION

IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS
OF THE PROFESSION

SAYS DR. C. A. TERRELL.

HIS TRIBUTE TO THE MEHARRY
BROTHERS AND DR. HUBBARD.
DEAN OF MEHARRY, WAS FIT-
TINGLY APPROPRIATE.

(An address delivered by Dr. C. A. Terrell, of Memphis, Tenn., before the Alumni Association of Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tenn., Friday, March 29, 1907.)

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Meharry Alumni Association: Words are inadequate in expressing my appreciation to you for the honor of appearing before you upon this occasion. The tribute of words that I gladly bring, and that you may take as expressing the sentiments of your brethren at large, necessarily begins with congratulations that your association is composed of men and women who were ushered into this world just a few days prior to, or shortly after the abolition of slavery, which was brought about by Christian men and women who had the spirit of the Great Physician within their hearts, and this taught them, that it was a great curse to allow human beings, though they be Negroes, to remain in servitude.

But congratulations must be mingled with praise of the band of noble men, the Meharry Brothers, who materially assisted in making this gathering possible. The Meharry Boys furnished the money, but who had the manhood and broad heart enough to take it and convert it into Medical, Surgical, Pharmaceutical and Dental brains? The answer is now an easy one, our beloved dean, Dr. G. W. Hubbard, who has spent the greater part of his life in educating Negro men and women as physicians, surgeons, dentists, pharmacists and, last but not least, trained nurses to minister to the urgent needs of our race.

How well we have done, this can easily be shown by the records of our large cities wherein are found a great number of our people. In the city of Memphis, having a population of two hundred thousands, fifty per cent being Negroes, the death rate ten years ago was three times as great as that of the white race, during this period the increase of Negro physicians has been from four to twenty-four, and the death rate has decreased in proportion to the increase of the presence of the Negro physicians; so that now, the weekly per cent of death rate is about equally divided among both races. If we can achieve so much without being well organized, and having no hospital advantages, what may be expected of us when we will have succeeded in organizing Negro medical societies and building hospitals throughout the south-land, where the doors of such needful help are closed against us?

The medical society is designed, (1) to lay a foundation for that unanimity and friendship, which is essential to the dignity and usefulness of the professional. (2) That in all cases where counsel is requisite they will assist each other without reserve. (3) That they will communicate their observations on the air, seasons, and climate with such discoveries as they may make in physics, surgery, botany or chemistry; and deliver faithful histories of the various diseases incident to the inhabitants of this country, with the mode of treatment and results.

With such objects in view we can easily see the educational value of medical society. There are many ills and difficulties in the education of the general practitioner. Over all we have some control, over none. The university and hard make it certain that the minimum at least of professional knowledge, but who can be of the state of that knowledge after five or ten years from his graduation? The specialty be trusted to take care of the conditions of his existence, and that he shall be abreast of times, but the family doctor, at the great army, the estab-lished factor in the battle should be nurtured by the schools and guarded by the public.



C. A. TERRELL, M. D.,
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Tenn.

Humanly speaking with him are the issues of life and death, since upon him fall the grievous responsibility in those terrible emergencies which bring darkness and despair to so many households. No class of men need to call to mind more often the wise comment of Plato; that "education is a life long business." The difficulties are partly adherent to the subject, partly have to do with the individual and his weakness. The problems of disease are more difficult than any others with which the trained mind has to grapple, the conditions in any given case may be unlike those in any other, each case indeed may have its own problem. Law constantly looking back, has its forms and procedures, its precedents and practices. Once grasped the certainties of divinity make its study a delight and its practice a past-time; but who can tell of the uncertainties of medicine as an art? The science upon which it is based is accurate and definite enough; the physics of a man's circulation are the physics of the water works of the town in which he lives, but once out of gear you can not apply the same rule for the repair of the one as of the other. Variability is the law of life and as no two faces are the same, so no two bodies are alike, and no two individuals react alike, and behave alike, under the abnormal conditions which we know as disease.

This is the fundamental difficulty in the education of the physician, and one which he may never grasp, or he takes it so tenderly that it hurts instead of boldly accepting the axiom of Bishop Butler, more true of medicine than any other profession, "Probability is the guide of life." Surrounded by people who demand certainty and not philosopher enough to agree with Locke that "Probability supplies the defect of our knowledge and guides us when that fails, and is always conversant about things of which we have no certainty."

Listen to the appropriate comments of the father of medicine, who twenty-five centuries ago had not only grasped the fundamental conception of our art as one based on observation, but had labored also through a long life to give to the profession which he loved the saving health-of science; listen, I say, to words of his famous aphorism: "Experience is fallacious and judgment difficult."

But the more serious problem relates to the education of the practitioner after he has left the schools. The foundation may not have been laid upon which to erect an intellectual structure and too often the man starts with a total misconception of the prolonged struggle necessary to

keep the education he has, to say nothing of bettering the instructions of the schools.

As the practice of medicine is not a business, and can never be one, the education of the heart, the moral side of man, must keep pace with the education of the head. Our fellow creatures can not be dealt with as men in corn and coal; the human heart by which we live must control our professional relations; after all the personal equation has most to do with our success of failure in medicine, and in the trials of life the fire which strengthens and tempers the metal of one may often ruin the other. For better or worse there are few occupations of a more satisfying character than the practice of medicine, if a man can but once bring to it the philosophy of honest work, the philosophy which insists that we are here, not to get all we can out of life about us, but to see how much we can add to it. The discontent and grumblings which one hears have their source in the man more often than in his environment. In the nature of the material in which we labor and of which, by the way, we are partakers, there is much that could be improved, but we accept men as the Lord made them and not expect too much. But let me say this of the public, it is rarely responsible for the failures in the profession. Occasionally a man of superlative merit is neglected, but it is because he lacks that most essential gift, the knowledge how to use his gifts.

The failure in 99 per cent of the cases is in the man himself, he has not started right, the poor chap has not had the choice of his parents or his education has been faulty, or he has fallen away to the worship of strange gods—Baal or, worse still, Bacchus. But after all the killing vice of the young doctor is intellectual laziness; he may have worked hard at college but the years of probation have been his ruin. Without specific subjects upon which to work he gets the newspaper or the novel habit and flitters his energies upon useless literature. There is no greater test of a man's strength than to make him "mark time" in the stand and wait years. Habits of systematic reading are rare and are becoming more rare, and five or ten years from his license, as practice begins to grow, may find the young doctor knowing less than he did when he started and without a fixed educational purpose in life. Now here is where the medical society may step in and prove his salvation. The doctor's post graduate education comes from patients, from books and journals, and from societies which should be supplemented every

five or six years by a return, to a post graduate school to get rid of an almost inevitable slovenliness in methods of work.

We should strive in our societies to lay a foundation for unity and friendship, which is essential to the dignity and usefulness of the profession. Yes, unity and friendship. How we all long for them! but how difficult to attain. Strife seems rather to be the very life of the practitioner, whose warfare is incessant against disease, and against ignorance and prejudice, and sad to have to admit, he too often lets his angry passions rise against his professional brother. The quarrels of doctors make a pretty chapter in the history of medicine.

When science has fully leavened the dough of homoeopathy the great breach of our day will be healed. But in too many towns and smaller communities miserable factions prevail and bickerings and jealousies mar the dignity and usefulness of the profession. So far as my observation goes, the fault lies with the older men, and right here, my professional brethren, is the crying need of medical, dental, pharmaceutical and nurse training societies to cement and hold us together, for in union there is great strength. The meeting is a friendly, social way to lead to a free and open discussion of differences in a spirit that refuses to recognize differences of opinion on the non-essentials of life as the cause of personal animosity or ill feeling. An attitude of mind habitually friendly more particularly to the young man, even though you feel him to be the David to whom your kingdom may fall, a little of the old fashion courtesy which makes a man shrink from wounding the feeling of a brother practitioner, in honor preferring one another, with such a spirit abroad in the society and among its older men, there is no reason for any hatred, malice or any uncharitableness. It is the confounded tales of patients that so often set us by the ears, but if a man makes it a rule never under any circumstances to believe a story told by a patient to the detriment of a fellow practitioner, even if he knows it to be true; though the measure he metes may not be measured to him again, he will have the satisfaction of knowing that he has closed the ears of his soul to 99 lies, and the hundredth truth will not hurt him.

Most of the quarrels of doctors are about non-essentials, miserable trifles and annoyances the pinprick of practice, which would some times try the patience of Job, but the good fellowship and friendly intercourse of the medical society should reduce those to a minimum. The well conducted medical society should represent a clearing house, in which every physician of the district would receive his intellectual rating, and in which he could find out his professional assets, and liabilities. We doctors do not take stock often enough, and are very apt to carry on our shelves stale, out of date goods. The society helps to keep a man up to the times, and enables him to refurnish his mental shop with the latest wares. Rightly used it may be a touch-stone to which he can bring his experiences to the test and save him from following in the rut of a few sequences. It keeps his mind open, and receptive and counteracts that tendency to premature senility, which is apt to overtake a man who lives in a routine. After receiving our medical education in the different colleges of the country, whose doors are not closed in our faces, and every month or two we strengthen our medical assets, by meeting together and exchanging ideas and thoughts, we at last find ourselves handicapped; for the majority of the hospitals in the South-land are either closed to us or our patients and most assuredly to our nurses.

Can it then be said that we do not need hospitals? As a race we are well supplied with churches, and partly so with schools, but we are sadly in need of modern up to date hospitals, wherein we can give our patients the best surgical, to say nothing about the medical treatment that each individual case may demand. This is not the only reasons why we should build hospitals, and help those that are already struggling for existence. It opens the way for the women of our race to become trained nurses, and earn a splendid living in having a vocation in which each must lead a busy, useful and happy life, more you cannot expect, a great blessing, the world cannot bestow. Busy you will certainly be, as the demand is great both in private and public for women of your training; useful your lives must be, as you will care for those who cannot care for themselves, and who need about them, in the day of tribulation, gentle hands and tender hearts. Fellow-workers, since our mission is that of dealing with the sick, and suf-

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TWENTY-FIRST COMMENCEMENT

OF MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE
TOOK PLACE

AT RYMAN AUDITORIUM.

GRADUATING CLASS LARGEST IN
HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTION.
IT WAS A BRILLIANT AND IN-
SPIRING OCCASION.

The thirty-first annual commencement exercises of Meharry Medical College were held at the Ryman Auditorium last Friday night March 29. The occasion was one long to be remembered in Nashville. It marked an epoch in history, making, so far as the medical, dental and pharmaceutical departments of this University are concerned, a lasting impression upon all. There went out into the world ninety-six graduates, who have labored for the past three and four years to win the diplomas which were presented to them on Friday night.

The Processional March "Canabaz" by R. H. Hall, was played by the University orchestra. Promptly at 7:30 p. m. the long line of graduates filed down the center aisle of the auditorium, made a circle in front of the stage, turned to the left and took their seats on the platform, arranged just behind the President, Dean and speaker for the occasion.

A Chorus, "There is Joy" from the "Prodigal Son" (Sullivan) was sung by the Choral Society, before an audience that completely filled the spacious auditorium. Dr. George W. Hubbard, Dean and founder of this great institution, called the house to order and in a few modest words invited the audience to stand while Dr. R. H. Boyd offered prayer, which he did in that earnest, simple form of speech which is so characteristic of him.

Chorus with solo, "The Miller's Wooing" (Fanning) by the Choral Society. Mr. Landry, Mr. Walker and Miss Roberts were heartily applauded. So prolonged was the encore that they were forced to render another selection. Dr. Hubbard then arose and said, "We are about to present to you to-night the largest medical class ever turned out from Meharry Medical College. The class numbers about one hundred. They come from nearly every state in the Union, from British Honduras, which is in Central America, West Indies and other points. This will make the total number sent out into the professional world from Meharry about one thousand. It is with pleasure that we make the statement to-night, that Meharry has furnished to the colored people a majority of all the medical graduates turned out from the schools for the race. This class promises greater achievements than any of its predecessors." These remarks were received with tremendous applause from the audience.

The salutatory by C. R. Yerwood, of Texas, on the "Moral Duty of the Physician," was timely, instructive and well rendered. He covered a scope along moral lines, which to his class, as well as those in the audience, should be followed verbatim. It was an earnest appeal for the moral uplifting of the medical profession, showing the many high and worthy duties to be performed in this work.

The pharmaceutical valedictory was by W. T. Durrell, of Tennessee, on "Pharmacy as Related to Medicine." He showed in a well prepared address the rapid strides made by the pharmaceutical graduates and the various associations organized in recent years, and the assistance they had been to the druggists and the doctors. He made a passionate appeal to his class and his hearers for renewed ambition.

"The Drum" by S. Archer Gibson, was rendered by the Glee Club, which elicited an encore from the vast crowd. Then G. D. Smith, of South Carolina, the dental valedictorian, discussed "Dentistry in the Field With Medicine." Hardly had he begun his masterly address before the audience was with him in seeing the advantages to be derived from competent dentists. So plain did he make his argument that at the conclusion of each sentence, he grew more enthused, taking on more eloquence as he proceeded.

The last address on behalf of the class was delivered by W. H. Bryan,